

Statement by

**the Republic of Slovenia**

**(United Nations Youth Delegate of the Republic of Slovenia)**

at the

**53rd Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council**

**Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education**

Geneva, 27 June 2023

Thank you, Mr President,

I am honoured to address the Human Rights Council today in my capacity of the Slovenian UN Youth Delegate.

Madam Special Rapporteur,

I thank you for your report on advances and challenges in securing the right to education.

Education is a fundamental human right and must be accessible to everyone. Unfortunately, as your report points out, for many it remains a privilege.

As a representative of youth, I would like to emphasize some of the greatest challenges and opportunities in this regard.

Firstly, right to education must be fulfilled in safe and inclusive environment. I am concerned by the recent rise of bullying and other forms of violence in schools. Furthermore, pressure to achieve excellence is leading to various mental health struggles. I call upon the decision-makers to not turn a blind eye, but to take concrete actions towards implementing preventive measures and prioritizing mental health.

Secondly, youth today fears that formal educational systems fail to address the skills and competences needed in an era of new and emerging technologies, including AI. As the Youth Declaration at the Transforming Education Summit last year underlines: decision-makers must invest in future-proof skills development to ensure access to decent jobs for youth.

And finally, Madam Special Rapporteur, I want to point out the importance of non-formal education. If we truly want to build a society where young people can flourish and achieve their dreams we need to ensure them safe spaces not only in formal but also through non-formal education, where any kind of discrimination is unacceptable.

How can we make sure decision-makers recognize and invest in non-formal education programs and organisations, as I believe empowering young people to be aware of their rights and responsibilities is a fundamental pillar for a strong democratic society?

I thank you.